

**Vermont Interactive Television Presentation:
Part B Child Find Responsibilities for Children Birth to Three Years of Age**

The Vermont Department of Education invites you to participate in a Vermont Interactive TV presentation on **Part B Child Find Responsibilities for Children Birth to Three Years of Age**. The ITV session will be held on **Friday, November 3, 2006 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

Karin Edwards, Department of Education Director of the Student Support Team, will review Commissioner Cate's August 2005 Child Find memo (see attached) and discuss LEA Part B Child Find obligations and financial responsibilities specific to children **birth to three years of age** who reside in your community.

- Attached you will find a copy of Commissioner Cate's Child Find memo that was sent to superintendents, special services directors and EEE coordinators in August of 2005. The memo defines a school district's ultimate responsibility to identify, locate, and evaluate children with suspected disabilities who are birth to three years of age. Please review this memo and what it means for your district, and have your questions ready for the November 3rd VIT presentation.
- The discussion will take place via **Vermont Interactive TV (VIT) on Friday, November 3, 2006 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**
- The following VIT sites are available:
 - Bennington
 - Brattleboro
 - Johnson
 - Middlebury
 - Randolph
 - Springfield
 - St. Albans
 - Waterbury
 - White River Junction
- For Vermont Interactive TV site directions please go to www.vitlink.org



STATE OF VERMONT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

120 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

To: Superintendents
Principals
Special Education Directors
Essential Early Education Coordinators

From: Richard H. Cate, Commissioner

Date: August 1, 2005

Re: Child Find and Transition Planning for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and Their Families

Early intervention for children from birth to age three who have special needs and their families has been shown to decrease or eliminate the need for later special education services and overall, lead to better outcomes for children and our schools. It is in this context that I write to you to clarify the responsibilities school districts have to children from birth to age three and their families who are eligible for Vermont's Family, Infant and Toddler Program (FITP), funded in part through the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), Part C.¹ School districts are responsible for "child find" and participating in transition planning for children from FITP to Essential Early Education (EEE) services. Although schools may play an important role in the provision of direct services, the focus of this memorandum is on child find and transition planning.

Child Find

As a condition for receiving Part B and C funds, the IDEA requires states to demonstrate that they have a comprehensive statewide child-find system for children birth through 21 years of age. This system needs to exist for all children with disabilities under Part B and Part C of IDEA. Specifically, a comprehensive child find system includes policies and procedures that ensure all infants and toddlers who may be eligible for services under Part C are identified and evaluated.² The Part C child find system must employ specific elements of evaluation and assessment, including a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment in all developmental areas. States are prohibited from charging parents for the costs of any child find activities.

In Vermont, the child find responsibility lies with school districts.³ School districts are responsible for child find for children birth to age three. In order to fulfill this responsibility, school districts may contract with regional Family, Infant and Toddler Programs and other

¹ IDEA Part C pertains to children from birth to age 3; Part B pertains to children age three through twenty-one.

² 34 CFR §303.321(b)(1).

³ VSBE Rule 2360.5

entities. Whether conducting Part C child find using school district staff or contracting with other agencies or programs, school districts have the option of using Part B funds⁴ for this purpose.

Transition Services

If it is determined that a child will also need early childhood special education services at age three, the efficacy of early intervention is enhanced through timely and seamless transitions. Three key steps in transition are: notice, conference participation, and IEP development. At least six months prior to a child's third birthday, FITP must send the supervisory union or local school district where the child resides written notification of the transition of children with anticipated eligibility for EEE.⁵ With the permission of the family, a conference to begin transition planning must occur at least 90 days and up to nine months prior to the child's third birthday. Although the Part C Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) service coordinator is responsible for providing notice and organizing transition planning conferences, IDEA requires that the school district participate in the transition planning conference for each child exiting FITP and entering EEE.⁶ Importantly, the school district must also ensure that the child transitioning from FITP to EEE has an IEP in place by his/her third birthday in order to meet Part B compliance.⁷

I hope that this memorandum answers questions you may have about responsibilities for child find and transition planning for FITP children. In addition to this memorandum, the Department recently sent a request to school district business managers and special education directors for actual expenditures necessary for Vermont's continued IDEA Part C funding. I appreciate your help in fulfilling this important task. Last, with input from Vermont's Interagency Coordinating Council, the Department of Education and the Agency of Human Services is developing a more detailed Part C interagency agreement. It is our shared goal that the updated agreement will better articulate responsibilities and help us to better coordinate services for children and families participating in FITP.

If you need further clarification on the legal requirements, please contact Mia Karvonides, one of the Department's legal counsel at 828-5106. If you need technical assistance in carrying out any of the obligations described, please contact Manuela Fonseca, the Department's Early Education Coordinator, at 828-3850, or Helen Keith, Vermont's FITP Director, at 241-3622 or (hkeith@vdh.state.vt.us).

Thank you.

C: Michael Smith, Secretary, Agency of Human Services
Ginger Potwin, Co-Chair, Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council
Terri Edgerton, Co-Chair, Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council
Part C Host Agencies

⁴ This includes both basic and preschool Part B funds.

⁵ VSBE Rule 2360.5.7 (c)(1); Federal law (IDEIA of 2004) states notice can be given nine months prior to the child's third birthday.

⁶ See 34 CFR §303.148. Other required members of transition planning conference are: the family, a representative from FITP, other FITP service providers, and others who are likely to provide services after the child turns three. VSBE Rule 2360.5.7 (c)(1).

⁷ VSBE Rule 2360.5.7 (d)(2).